

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2446

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1059

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EIND, KS, IZ

SUBJECT: ROK PURSUES MIDDLE EAST CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS

REF: A) SEOUL 5765 B) BAGHDAD 924 (NOTAL)

1. USINT QUESTIONS BASIS OF ROK'S CONFIDENCE REPORTED REF A
PARA 2A THAT "IRAQI NONRECOGNITION OF ROK NOT EXPECTED TO
PRECLUDE ACTIVITIES BY PRIVATE ROK CONSTRUCTION FIRMS." GOI
HAS CONSISTENTLY, STRONGLY AND LOUDLY SUPPORTED NORTH KOREA'S
STAND ON EVERY MAJOR ISSUE ON WHICH THE NORTH DIFFERS FROM THE
SOUTH. USINT WOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO RULE OUT FLATLY SOUTH
KOREAN PARTICIPATION IN MAJOR PROJECTS IN IRAQ. BUT ROK
CONTRACTORS WILL HAVE SERIOUS OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME.

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2. SENIOR OFFICIAL OF US FIRM LUMMUS, SPEAKING OF HIS FIRM'S INTEREST IN BASRA PETROCHEMICAL PROJECT (REF. B), TOLD USINT COMMERCIAL ATTACHE OCTOBER 4TH THAT HE HAS RECEIVED CONSISTENTLY COOL AND NEGATIVE REACTION FROM EVERY GOI OFFICIAL WITH WHOM HE HAS RAISED ISSUE OF POSSIBLE SOUTH KOREAN SUBCONTRACTING. SAID THAT GIST OF MESSAGE HE RECEIVED WAS: AFTER YOU HAVE TRIED AND FAILED TO FIND SUITABLE SUBCONTRACTORS FROM AMONG ARABS, NON-ARAB MUSLIMS, NON-ALIGNED NATIONS (ESPECIALLY YUGOSLAVIA) OR FRIENDLY ASIANS (PHILIPPINES WERE EXPLICITLY APPROVED)--IN THAT ORDER--THEN AND ONLY THEN MIGHT LUMMUS HAVE REASON TO PROPOSE SOUTH KOREAN ACTIVITY IN IRAQ.

3. ON BALANCE WE WOULD ADVISE ROK CONTRACTORS TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH THEIR INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATES ON POSSIBLE SUB-CONTRACTS IN IRAQ BUT TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS THEY MAY ENCOUNTER IN REACHING AGREEMENT WITH THE GOI. IN VIEW OF THE AMBITIOUS SCOPE OF IRAQI DEVELOPMENT PLANS, THERE MAY STILL BE HOPE FOR SOUTH KOREAN PARTICIPATION.WILEY

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